

NORTH FORK NOOKSACK RIVER PROJECT 2 CED RETROFIT

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INTRODUCTION

The North Fork Nooksack (NFN) River retrofit project is located along State Route (SR) 542. This project consists of several sites that are planned to be constructed during the 2005-07 biennium. SR 542 is a main transit route for local, commercial, and tourist traffic.

THE CED PROBLEM

This North Fork Nooksack CED Retrofit consists of 15 sites from MP 20.5 to 45.15. At these sites, SR 542 runs parallel to the river. The river channel and SR 542 are located immediately adjacent to one another and the river frequently erodes portions of the road prism in some areas during high flow events. The emergency repairs that have been made are expensive, hurried, and often times a temporary remedy for problematic site conditions. These repairs (usually the addition of riprap) could be causing adverse environmental impacts within the stream channel and are not conducive to long-term ecological revitalization of the river and its floodplain.

FISH UTILIZATION & HABITAT AVAILABILITY

The North Fork Nooksack River system supports Chinook, chum, coho, pink, steelhead, cutthroat and bull trout/dolly varden. Cutthroat are presumed to be present. A few Sockeye have also been observed utilizing the system.

Chinook within the river system represent a distinct stock. It is a native stock with composite production, and its status is considered to be critical based on chronically low escapement. This species is currently listed as threatened.

Chum within the system are also considered a distinct stock. It is a native stock with wild production whose status is healthy. Chum tend to use primarily the lower sections of the NFN and also spawn in some tributary streams.

Steelhead are also identified as a distinct stock. They are of the Mainstem/NFN stock and they spawn in the Mainstem, North Fork, and tributaries. It is a native, wild stock, sustained by natural production whose status is unknown.

Two stocks of bull trout/dolly varden are identified as using the NFN River and/or its tributaries. These are the lower Nooksack and Canyon Creek Stocks. The stocks are native and are believed to be composed of anadromous, fluvial, and resident life history forms, which have the potential to commingle in many of the spawning areas. Bull trout/dolly varden are currently listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

RETROFIT PROJECT

The Integrated Streambank Protection Guidelines (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/hab/ahg/ispgdoc.htm>) were used to address the overall project objectives. It is anticipated that the outcome of this project will result in meeting the necessary requirements to protect SR 542 and provide environmental enhancements along these reaches.